

III - ALTERNATIVE CONSERVATION SYSTEMS

INTRODUCTION

This section contains information on Alternative Conservation Systems for implementing the Conservation Compliance Provisions of the Food Security Act of 1985, as amended. Definitions and criteria are presented below. Alternative Conservation Systems with guide sheets and system narratives for this Field Office, if needed, will be found immediately following this page. ACSs need not be developed and placed in this section if the area served by the Field Office does not have commodity crops on Highly Erodible Lands (HEL). However, a letter from the State Conservationist approving this action needs to be placed in the backup data file. If the need for development of ACSs arises, refer to the appropriate California amendment to the NFSAM.

Definitions

An Alternative Conservation System (ACS) must result in a substantial reduction in soil erosion. It is specifically defined as an erosion control system that allows erosion to exceed the rate prescribed under the BCS (Basic Conservation System), yet not exceed an established level based on local technical, social, economic and cultural conditions. "Substantial reduction" for the ACS is defined under "Criteria"

Criteria

ACS – Predicted average annual wind or water erosion rates will exceed "T" + 1 ton for the given soil(s) but does not exceed 2T+1 ton for the soil(s). An ACS may have a higher rate than 2T+1 where local technical, social, economic or cultural conditions require this need. Higher rates are to be reviewed with the Assistant State Conservationist for Field Operations and the Resource Conservation District (RCD) or other applicable group in non RCD areas.

Use of Alternative Conservation Systems on Sodbusted Lands

Sodbusted lands that were cropped or in an approved cropland rotation (alfalfa, asparagus, vineyards, orchards, etc.) during the period 1981-1985 are to be treated with either an ACS or a BCS.

All sodbusted lands that were not cropped or in an approved cropland rotation during the period 1981-1985 must be treated with only BCSs. This only covers sodbusted lands broken out of native range which have never been cropped (no Farm Services Agency – formerly ASCS - cropping history) or broken out of chaparral, woodland, forest or similar native or natural cover.